DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 218 020 RC 013 385

AUTHOR Ohlendorf, George W.; Rafferty, Donna M.
TITLE The Educational and Occupational Aspirations of Louisiana Rural High School Students: A Comparative Study.
INSTITUTION Louisiana State Univ., Baton Rouge. Agricultural Experiment Station.
PUB DATE Apr 82
NOTE 24p.; Two pages of Appendix A may not reproduce well due to small print.
AVAILABLE FROM Dept. of Rural Sociology, Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-5411.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Aspiration; Analysis of Variance; Black Students; Comparative Analysis; Females; *Geographic Location; High Schools; *High School Students; Males; National Surveys; *Occupational Aspiration; *Rural Youth; Sex; State Surveys; *Time; White Students
IDENTIFIERS *Louisiana; National Longitudinal Study High School Class 1972; Southern Youth Study; United States; United States (South)

ABSTRACT

The study contributed to further understanding of the educational and occupational aspirations of Louisiana rural seniors during 1968 and 1972 and of rural seniors from throughout the United States and the South in 1972. Of the variables used, i.e., time, location, sex, and race, two variables were significant on levels of aspiration time and location. Educational and occupational aspirations of the 1972 Louisiana rural seniors decreased in comparison to those of 1968. Educational aspirations of 1972 rural seniors from Louisiana were significantly lower than those of both southern region and U.S. rural seniors. In each instance, marginals showed that these differences for Louisiana rural seniors in 1972 occurred throughout the range of each respective aspirational variable and were not confined to any single or dual categories. Educational aspirations were affected more by time and geographic location than occupational aspirations and rural white females from Louisiana consistently had higher occupational aspirations than all other students. Conclusions point to the possiblity that both communication and counseling efforts for rural youth have fallen short. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) summary tables provide information on six aspiration variables. Appended are excerpts from the research instrument and an overview of the ANOVA measurement technique. (Author/AH)

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April 1982

Bulletin No. 737

The Educational and Occupational Aspirations of Louisiana Rural High School Students: A Comparative Study

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The Educational and Occupational Aspirations of Louisiana Rural High School Seniors: A Comparative Study

GEORGE W. OHLENDORF AND DONNA M. RAFFERTY[1]

Introduction

During the past two decades, several studies have been conducted on the educational and occupational aspirations of rural youth. This research was stimulated by the contention that rural youth had lower aspirations than urban youth and, consequently, could not compete effectively for jobs in the urban labor market (Lipset, 1955; Sewell and Orenstein, 1965).

Studies of aspirations conducted in various places have produced findings indicating that rural youth generally had lower aspirations than urban youth. These findings suggested that research was needed on the consistency of aspirations among rural youth throughout the United States and on the stability of aspirations of youth over time. It is not clear whether aspirations of youth are affected by the socialization processes they experience.

The general objective of this study was to compare the educational and occupational aspirations of two cohorts (age groups) of Louisiana rural high school seniors—the classes of 1968 and 1972—and to compare the 1972 Louisiana cohort with a regional and national counterpart. The first specific aim was to ascertain whether the aspirations of seniors from Louisiana rural high schools in 1968 differed significantly from the aspirations of seniors in the same or similar schools in 1972. The second specific goal of the study included two parts: first, to compare the aspirations of the 1972 Louisiana rural students with a sample of students from the southern states; and second, to compare Louisiana students with a national sample in terms of their educational and occupational aspirations.

The research conducted was unique in that it involved comparisons between state, regional, and national sample populations during the same year. It also provided the opportunity to determine whether the aspirations of rural youth from the same area remained stable over time. The data collected were from both black and white respondents and from respondents of both sexes.

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Frame of Reference

This study, as noted, deals with the concept of aspiration. Specifically, it is concerned with level of educational aspiration and level of occupational aspiration. It was conceptualized that aspirations are acquired through the socialization process and that this process would change in response to location and time. The latter was seen as providing a perspective for the study of stability or change in aspirations.

Aspiration

Aspiration was viewed as a special type of attitude, one which involved a favorable orientation toward a goal. In light of this definition, aspirations were operationalized as the desired future ends or goals which students sought.

In elaborating the concept of aspiration, it is appropriate to point out that the choice of an occupation in American society is not an easy task because there are over 20,000 different occupations (McNeil, 1969:223). Most of the occupations require specific types of education for entry, and individual decisions about education and careers tend to be made during the high school years. Hence, the student decides on the type of job he or she wants and pursues the formal education necessary to get the job. These decisions are indicators of both educational aspiration and occupational aspiration.

Level of occupational aspiration is an extension of the general concept of aspiration. It involves perception of self relative to a particular level in the prestige hierarchy represented by the occupation. This particular orientation toward an occupation serves to channel action toward attainment of an occupational goal. A favorable attitude toward achieving the education necessary for an occupational goal is an indicator of level of educational aspiration.

Time

Historical events may influence the attitudes, beliefs, and goals of people in a society at any given time. The impact of time thus needs to be considered in studies of aspirations. Since values of the larger society influence the development of aspirations among adolescents, any study of the aspirations of youth must consider the values popular at the time. In this study, it was important that the social activism of the 1960's and 1970's be taken into consideration in assessing the aspirations expressed by high school students.

Location

The extent to which value orientations vary from one region to another is also of importance in studying aspirations of youth. In this study, it was of particular interest to determine whether the aspirations of rural youth in

Louisiana differed from rural youth elsewhere. This question was considered especially pertinent because of the notion that rural youth would be less likely to be affected by social movements such as occurred in the 1960's.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses that follow were designed in accordance with the objectives of the study.

Hypothesis 1: In selected Louisiana rural high schools, the educational aspirations of the senior students of 1972 will be significantly different from those of the senior students of 1968 for each sex and race combination.

Hypothesis 2: In selected Louisiana rural high schools, the occupational aspirations of the senior students of 1972 will be significantly different from those of the senior students of 1968 for each sex and race combination.

Hypothesis 3: The educational aspirations of the senior students of 1972 in selected Louisiana high schools will not differ significantly from those of senior students of 1972 in selected rural high schools in the southern region.

Hypothesis 4: The occupational aspirations of the senior students of 1972 in selected Louisiana rural high schools will not differ significantly from those of senior students of 1972 in selected rural high schools in the southern region.

Hypothesis 5: The educational aspirations of the senior students of 1972 in selected Louisiana rural high schools will not differ significantly from those of senior students of 1972 in selected rural high schools in other parts of the United States.

Hypothesis 6: The occupational aspirations of the senior students of 1972 in selected Louisiana rural high schools will not differ significantly from those of the senior students of 1972 in selected rural high schools in other parts of the United States.

Research Procedures

Source and Collection of Data

Data used in this study were obtained from two separate research projects—the Southern Youth Study (SYS) and the National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972.

Southern Youth Study. The first project, known as the SYS—project S-114 and its predecessors, S-61 and S-81—is a longitudinal study of rural youth supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station. The research for the project was done in cooperation with the agricultural experiment stations of five other southern

states. Information on the first cohort was collected in 1968 and on the second in 1972.

A proportionate, stratified, random cluster sampling technique was employed to obtain a representative sample of rural high school youth in Louisiana. The following procedure was used to select the sample: (1) The state was divided into geographical quadrants to represent four areas which differ in social and economic characteristics. (2) Schools were designated as the sampling units. Four to six schools were selected randomly from the nonmetropolitan parishes of each quadrant. To obtain a representative sample of both black and white students in proportion to the enrollment of nonmetropolitan students within the state, a total of 20 schools was selected, 13 white and 7 black. (3) The questionnaire was administered to all senior students present in school on the day of the survey.

In 1972, an effort was made to collect data from the same schools as in 1968. This could not be done in all instances because of changes that had taken place in the schools. In the desegregation process, many Louisiana high schools were combined, some old ones closed, and some new ones opened.

Only four of the original 20 schools—three white and one black—were substantially the same as in 1968. These four schools, the previously segregated schools that had been desegregated, and two private academies were selected as the sampling units in 1972. The private academies were selected because some students who would normally have been attending the public schools were enrolled in them. Although all seniors present on the day of the survey completed questionnaires, only students of the race predominant in the corresponding 1968 school were used in the analysis. This was done in an attempt to test only those respondents who would have been seniors in 1972 in the original 20 schools. To the degree possible, this filtering of the 1972 respondents assures that the 1968 and 1972 samples were comparable. Several social background characteristics of the two samples were tested to verify comparability. No significant differences were found in mother's education, father's education, or major money earner's occupation.

Data for the SYS in 1968 were collected by means of group interviews in the schools during early April. These interviews were conducted by staff members (faculty and graduate assistants) from the Department of Rural Sociology at Louisiana State University, who had been instructed in interview procedures prior to the field work. Approximately one hour was required for each interview. A total of 544 completed questionnaires were obtained—325 from whites, 218 from blacks, and one from a Native American. The detailed distribution of respondents by area and school is provided in the appendix.

A slightly modified version of the 1968 questionnaire was used in 1972. During May, this questionnaire was administered to the senior classes.

Completed questionnaires were obtained from 453 seniors in the schools. A mailed questionnaire was used for one private academy because the school year had concluded too early for the questionnaire to be administered at school. This academy had 19 graduates, 17 of whom returned their questionnaires. The distribution of respondents by area and school is provided in the appendix.

National Longitudinal Study. The second project from which data were utilized is the National Longitudinal Study (NLS) of the High School Class of 1972. This study is part of a long-term survey effort supported by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the former U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (Levinsohn et al., 1978). The NLS study was designed to provide statistics on a national cohort of students going through the process of leaving the school system and entering adult life.

In the NLS, the sampling design is a stratified two-stage probability sample with schools as the first-stage sampling units and students as the second-stage units. The sampling population was determined as all 1972 twelfth grade students enrolled in all public, private, and church-affiliated high schools in the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The school sampling frame was stratified into 600 final strata according to the following criteria: (1) type of institution (public, nonpublic); (2) geographic region (northeast, north central, south, west); (3) senior enrollment (<300, 300-599, ≥600); (4) proximity to institutions of higher learning; (5) percent minority enrolled; (6) income level of the community; (7) degree of urbanization.

A representative sample of the schools was drawn. In order to increase the number of disadvantaged students, schools located in low-income areas and schools with high proportions of minority group enrollment were sampled at approximately twice the rate used for the remaining schools.

The NLS sample design called for the selection of 1,200 primary sample schools with 18 students per school participating in the survey. Of these 1,200 schools, 948 participated, 21 had no seniors enrolled, and 231 had either refused to participate or could not participate.

Because of this high rate of nonresponse in the base-year survey, the NCES attempted to resurvey the 231 nonparticipant schools and to survey replacements for the 21 schools with no seniors. Of the 231 primary sample schools, 205 participated in the resurvey with up to 18 former students being randomly selected from the 1972 graduating class. Students from substitute schools were also included in the base-year survey. In all, data were collected from students representing 1,069 participating schools in the base-year study.

The bulk of the student data was collected in April, May, and June of

1972 through group completion of questionnaires in each school. Information was collected from a total of 22,652 students, but only the 4,738 students in rural or farming communities were used as respondents in this study.

Operationalization of Variables

Six variables—four independent and two dependent—were used in this study. The independent variables are sex, race, year, and location; educational aspiration and occupational aspiration are the dependent variables. These variables were operationally defined by questionnaire items answered by the respondents. The specific questions used are provided in the appendix.

Educational aspiration was determined by the response the student gave to the education he or she desired: quit high school, complete high school, complete a business or technical program, graduate from junior college, graduate from college, or complete additional studies after college. These were assigned scores from 1 through 6, respectively.

Occupational aspiration was defined in terms of the student's response to the kind of job he or she would like to have. The questionnaire items differed slightly between the SYS and the NLS so the data from both studies were recoded using slightly modified Bureau of the Census occupational groupings. Categories used were: professional, technical, manager, farmer/farm manager, clerical, sales, military (officer or enlisted), craftsman/skilled craftsman, operative, service and labor, and homemaker/housewife. Numerical values ranging between 1 and 11 were assigned inversely to these categories.

Residence in this study included only rural students. Respondents were asked to choose an answer which best described the place in which they lived. The questionnaire items in the SYS and the NLS varied. To account for this discrepancy, only NLS students who answered that they lived in a rural or farming community were used as rural seniors. All respondents in the SYS were used even though six students responded that they had lived previously in a city of 2,500 or greater. This was done because the next category of the NLS question included students who lived in cities of up to 50,000 population.

Region was used to define students from the South according to the Census definition for this region (Levinsohn et al., 1978:G.1).

Analytical Technique

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was selected as the statistical test to determine if any significant differences in aspirations existed between the groups of students with respect to sex, race, year, and location.[2] The

[2]See Appendix B for comments on the use of ANOVA in this study.

general linear model was used because of the relatively large sample and the unbalanced design.

Analysis and Interpretation

Changes in student aspirations over time (Hypotheses 1 and 2) are analyzed first; this is followed by analysis of differences in student aspirations between locations (Hypotheses 3-6).

Time—1968 to 1972

In this section, the hypothesized relationships presented earlier are tested for change in aspirations over time for each race and sex combination.

Educational aspirations. Significant differences in educational aspirations between the 1968 and 1972 classes of Louisiana rural high school seniors are evident in the ANOVA summary table and the means presented in Table 1. The educational aspirations of the 1968 rural high school

Table 1.—Analysis of variance and means for educational aspirations of Louisiana rural high school seniors in 1968 and 1972, by race and sex

ANOVA Summary Table

Source	Degrees of freedom	Sum of squares	F ratio
TOTAL	987	2,022.59	
Year	1	24.54	12.17**
Sex	1	0.11	0.05
Race	1	10.80	5.36*
Year x Sex	1	0.44	0.22
Year x Race	1	2.72	1.35
Sex x Race	1	2.48	1.23
Year x Sex x Race	1	1.06	0.52
ERROR	980	1,975.35	

Race x Sex	Year	
	1968	1972
	-Means-	
White Male	4.38 N=167	4.27 N=149
White Female	4.36 N=157	4.02 N=161
Black Male	4.67 N=89	4.20 N=64
Black Female	4.73 N=124	4.31 N=77

*P<.05
**P<.01

seniors were higher (4.50) than those of the 1972 rural high school seniors (4.18). This finding suggests that social activism in the late 1960's and early 1970's did not result in higher aspirations among these rural students during this four-year interval.

There was also a difference in aspirations between rural black students and rural white students. Rural black students had higher educational aspirations than the rural white students (4.53 and 4.26, respectively). There was little difference in educational aspirations between male students (4.38) and female students (4.34).

Overall, rural black female seniors of the class of 1968 had the highest educational aspirations. This finding is consistent with earlier studies (Coleman, 1976). Rural black male students had the second highest level of aspiration, while rural white male and female students had equivalent educational aspirations. These findings are also supportive of earlier research (see Clay, 1976 and Coleman, 1976).

In 1972, the educational aspirations of rural high school seniors had dropped markedly compared with those of the class of 1968. This is contrary to the findings of Clay (1976) that, overall, the aspirations of students rise over time. Again, black female students had the highest aspirations, but white males held the second highest level of aspiration. Black males and white females had lower educational aspirations. The low white female aspirations are contrary to Clay's findings in an Ontonogan County, Michigan study.

Occupational aspirations. The occupational aspirations of the senior class of 1972 were significantly different from those of the senior class of 1968 (Table 2). The rural seniors of 1968 had higher aspirations than did the rural seniors of 1972 (8.43 and 8.06, respectively). Again, this finding is inconsistent with most previous studies in which student aspirations increased over time. There was also a difference between the sexes. Female senior students (8.68) had much higher occupational aspirations than male students (7.79). Little difference in occupational aspirations was found between black students (8.36) and white students (8.21).

Rural black female students had the highest occupational aspirations in 1968. White females had the second highest level of aspiration, while rural black male students and white male students had the lowest occupational aspirations. This is consistent with the findings of Kuvlesky and Edington (1976).

In 1972 the level of occupational aspiration of rural seniors had declined for each race and sex combination. White females had the highest aspirations. Black males and black females aspired to nearly the same levels of occupation. The decline in aspirations of black females was the greatest of this group. Again white males had the lowest occupational aspirations.

Table 2.—Analysis of variance and means for occupational aspirations of Louisiana rural high school seniors in 1968 and 1972, by race and sex

ANOVA Summary Table

Source	Degrees of freedom	Sum of squares	F ratio
TOTAL	960	8,279.92	
Year	1	39.18	4.66*
Sex	1	125.06	14.86**
Race	1	0.39	0.05
Year x Sex	1	12.77	1.52
Year x Race	1	8.14	0.97
Sex x Race	1	14.92	1.77
Year x Sex x Race	1	0.91	0.11
ERROR	953	8,020.67	

Race x Sex	Year	
	1968	1972
	Means	
White Male	7.71 N=165	7.65 N=142
White Female	8.93 N=154	8.51 N=160
Black Male	8.15 N=80	7.83 N=60
Black Female	8.97 N=124	8.03 N=76

*P<.05
**P<.01

Location—Southern Region vs. Louisiana

Comparisons between the southern region rural sample from the NLS and the Louisiana rural sample of the SYS are made in this section.

Educational aspirations. An inspection of Table 3 reveals a significant difference in educational aspirations between southern and Louisiana senior students in 1972. The southern region rural seniors had higher aspirations (4.43) than the Louisiana rural seniors (4.18), and male seniors had higher aspirations (4.48) than female seniors (4.21).

There was virtually no effect of race on the educational aspirations of black students (4.37) and white students (4.33). Rural white males and rural black males of the southern region had equivalent aspirations. Rural black females of the southern region had much higher aspirations than rural white females of the region.

Table 3.—Analysis of variance and means for educational aspirations of southern rural high school seniors and Louisiana rural high school seniors in 1972, by race and sex

ANOVA Summary Table

Source	Degrees of freedom	Sum of squares	F ratio
TOTAL	1,173	2,365.44	
Location	1	14.05	7.07**
Sex	1	3.60	1.81
Race	1	2.45	1.23
Location x Sex	1	1.21	0.56
Location x Race	1	0.04	0.02
Sex x Race	1	3.80	1.91
Location x Sex x Race	1	0.06	0.03
ERROR	1,166	2,316.82	

Race x Sex	Location	
	Southern	Louisiana
	Means	
White Male	4.62 N=296	4.27 N=149
White Female	4.24 N=355	4.02 N=161
Black Male	4.62 N=32	4.20 N=64
Black Female	4.52 N=40	4.31 N=77

*P<.05
**P<.01

The black female seniors in Louisiana rural high schools had the highest aspirations. As was true for the regional sample, rural white males and rural black males were similar in their levels of educational aspirations, and rural white females of the Louisiana sample had the lowest educational aspirations. These low white female aspirations might be attributed to the traditional belief that young rural women just graduated from high school are supposed to get married and start a family or get a job working in the clerical or sales area.

Occupational aspirations. No evidence was found of significant effects of location or race on the occupational aspirations of the seniors in the southern region or the seniors in Louisiana, but a slight difference between the sexes was noted (Table 4). The Louisiana rural seniors had slightly higher aspirations than the southern region rural seniors (8.06 and 7.87, respectively). The occupational aspirations of male students (7.75) were lower than those of female students (8.10). Overall, there was no difference detected between black students and white students, both groups having equivalent occupational aspirations (7.95 and 7.94, respectively).

Table 4.—Analysis of variance and means for occupational aspirations of southern rural high school seniors and Louisiana rural high school seniors in 1972, by race and sex

ANOVA Summary Table

Source	Degrees of freedom	Sum of squares	F ratio
TOTAL	1,160	11,582.90	
Location	1	2.13	0.21
Sex	1	39.84	4.00*
Race	1	0.28	0.03
Location x Sex	1	0.02	0.00
Location x Race	1	1.86	0.19
Sex x Race	1	0.21	0.02
Location x Sex x Race	1	20.66	2.07
ERROR	1,153	11,497.26	

Race x Sex	Location	
	Southern	Louisiana
	Means	
White Male	7.81 N=296	7.65 N=142
White Female	7.90 N=355	8.51 N=160
Black Male	7.47 N=32	7.83 N=60
Black Female	8.38 N=40	8.03 N=76

*P<.05
**P<.01

Rural black female seniors from the southern region had the highest level of aspiration for their group. White males had the second highest level of aspiration, and rural white females had much higher occupational aspirations than black males of the southern region.

In contrast to the regional data, rural white females in Louisiana had the highest occupational aspirations. Black male and black female students had comparable levels of occupational aspiration, and rural white males had the lowest aspirations.

Location: United States vs. Louisiana

Educational Aspirations. Table 5 discloses a statistically significant difference in educational aspirations between the 1972 rural high school seniors in the United States and those in Louisiana. The national senior students had higher educational aspirations (4.41) than did the Louisiana seniors (4.18), and the aspirations of male students (4.48) were higher than those of female students (4.26). There was virtually no difference between the black and the white students in level of educational aspiration (4.38 and 4.37, respectively).

Rural black male students of the national sample had the highest educational aspirations. Rural white males and rural black females had comparable educational aspirations, while rural white females had the lowest educational aspirations. These findings are supportive of the literature

Table 5.—Analysis of variance and means for educational aspirations of United States rural high school seniors and Louisiana rural high school seniors in 1972, by race and sex

ANOVA Summary Table

Source	Degrees of freedom	Sum of squares	F ratio
TOTAL	2,463	4,682.87	
Location	1	15.12	8.03**
Sex	1	4.21	2.24
Race	1	3.70	1.96
Location x Sex	1	1.38	0.73
Location x Race	1	0.23	0.12
Sex x Race	1	1.18	0.63
Location x Sex x Race	1	1.45	0.77
ERROR	2,456	4,625.56	

Race x Sex	Location	
	United States	Louisiana
	Means	
White Male	4.53 N=920	4.27 N=149
White Female	4.29 N=1014	4.02 N=161
Black Male	4.72 N=36	4.20 N=64
Black Female	4.46 N=43	4.31 N=77

*P<.05
**P<.01

dealing with educational aspirations—see Kuvlesky and Boykin (1977) and Clay (1976).

In contrast to the national sample, the rural black females of the Louisiana sample had the highest aspirations. Rural white males had roughly the same level of educational aspiration, and rural black males were only slightly lower. Again, the rural white females had the lowest educational aspirations.

Occupational aspirations. An examination of Table 6 reveals a slight difference in the occupational aspirations of the 1972 rural high school seniors in the United States and Louisiana. Aspirations of the national rural seniors (7.67) were slightly lower than those of Louisiana rural seniors (8.06). There were differences in aspirations between male and female students (7.48 and 7.97, respectively). Black students (8.00) and white students (7.72) had comparable levels of aspiration.

Table 6.—Analysis of variance and means for occupational aspirations of United States rural high school seniors and Louisiana rural high school seniors in 1972, by race and sex

ANOVA Summary Table

Source	Degrees of freedom	Sum of squares	F ratio
TOTAL	2,450	27,802.97	
Location	1	3.46	0.31
Sex	1	50.77	4.50*
Race	1	3.38	0.30
Location x Sex	1	0.12	0.01
Location x Race	1	14.62	1.30
Sex x Race	1	1.54	0.14
Location x Sex x Race	1	9.26	0.82
ERROR	2,443	27,570.64	

Race x Sex	Location	
	United States	Louisiana
	Means	
White Male	7.42 N=920	7.65 N=142
White Female	7.86 N=1014	8.51 N=160
Black Male	7.72 N=36	7.83 N=60
Black Female	8.44 N=43	8.03 N=76

*P<.05
**P<.01

Rural black females in the national sample had the highest aspirations of their group. Rural white females and rural black males had comparable levels of occupational aspiration. This finding is consistent with those of Coleman (1976).

Of the Louisiana sample, rural white females had the highest occupational aspirations. This is supportive of Clay's 1976 follow-up study in Ontonogan County, Michigan. Black male and black female seniors had similar levels of aspiration. Again, as in the national sample, rural white males had the lowest occupational aspirations.

Summary of Results

In summary, the educational and occupational aspirations of 1972 Louisiana rural high school seniors decreased in comparison to those of the 1968 seniors. This finding suggests that social events which occurred during the years that the 1972 seniors were in high school did not have a positive effect on their aspirations.

There was a significant difference in educational aspirations between 1972 rural high school seniors from Louisiana and those from the southern region. The southern students aspired to much higher levels of education than did the Louisiana seniors. There was no evidence of a significant effect of location on the occupational aspirations of these students.

Significant differences in educational aspirations were found between rural high school seniors in the United States and in Louisiana, but only a slight effect of location was found on the occupational aspirations of the students.

Summary and Implications

The purpose of this study was to contribute to further understanding of the aspirations of rural high school seniors. Specifically, emphasis was placed on the educational and occupational aspirations of Louisiana rural seniors during 1968 and 1972 and on rural seniors in 1972 from throughout the United States and the South. The variables time and location as well as sex and race were tested to ascertain whether these groups of students differed in their educational and occupational aspirations. Two effects—time and location—were significant on levels of aspiration. The educational and occupational aspirations of the 1972 Louisiana rural high school seniors decreased in comparison to those of 1968 seniors. Educational aspirations of the 1972 rural seniors from Louisiana were significantly lower than those of both the southern region and the United States. In each instance, the marginals showed that these differences for the Louisiana rural seniors in 1972 occurred throughout the range of each respective aspirational variable and were not confined to any single or dual categories.

The findings suggest that educational aspirations are affected more by time and geographic location than occupational aspirations are.

The first major finding of this study was that the seniors of 1972 from Louisiana rural high schools had lower educational aspirations than 1968 Louisiana rural high school seniors, 1972 southern rural high school seniors, and United States rural high school seniors in 1972. The finding has significance for educational programs as well as for aspiration theory. Since Louisiana is part of the Sunbelt, a region with abundant employment opportunities, Louisiana rural youth may have become more strongly oriented toward employment opportunities than toward further education. This is supported by the concurrent decline in occupational aspirations, indicating a desire for jobs with lower educational requirements. However, many of the "better" jobs that are being created through industrialization in this region require more formal education, so attaining the education to qualify for these jobs will become more important to future high school seniors.

Rural white females from Louisiana consistently had higher occupational aspirations than all other students. This may be attributed to the fact that two traditional female occupations to which many white females in the state have been attracted, nurse and teacher, are included as professional occupations, thus giving white females an overall higher occupational aspiration.

The findings of this study contribute to better understanding of the educational and occupational aspirations of rural white and rural black high school seniors. It was found, for example, that the educational and occupational aspirations of Louisiana rural high school seniors did not increase over time as was theorized. The fact that they decreased suggests that social time needs to be considered when studying the aspirations of comparable rural youth at different times or periods.

In this study, the differences in aspirations over time may be related to the social activism of the 1960's and 1970's when many youth were seeking alternative goals and means of fulfilling these goals. It has been suggested, in this regard, that the cultural revolution was centered generally in upper-middle class youth and that the college-educated children of lower-middle and working-class families face greater prospects for social mobility (Berger and Berger, 1971). At any rate, effect of social time on aspirations of youth needs to be studied with more inclusive populations over longer periods. Whether this decline in aspirations—both educational and occupational—has continued into the 1980's is of even greater interest and needs to be addressed in future research.

In concluding, attention should be directed toward the implications of this study. Some rural youth obviously are not abreast of the developments in education that will affect their immediate future. Although a great deal of attention has been devoted to improving the information available to rural

youth, it is possible that both communication and counseling efforts have fallen short. Educators should be made aware of this fact.

In particular, the position of counselor has been established in many schools for the purpose of helping students make realistic decisions. Counselors need to be well informed about current developments with respect to education and employment, and they need to make rural young people aware of these developments. Until this is done, rural youth will continue to be disadvantaged with respect to urban employment opportunities. This is a challenge for school officials who serve rural communities.

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Appendix A

Excerpts from Research Instrument

2. Sex (Circle one number): 1 Male 2 Female

4. Where have you lived most of your life? (Circle one number):

1 Large city (50,000 and over)

2 Medium city (10,000 to 50,000)

3 Small city (2,500 to 10,000)

4 Town or village (under 2,500)

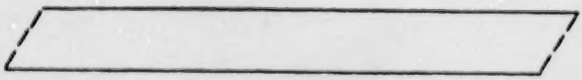
5 In the country, but not on a farm

6 On a farm

6. What is your race? (Circle one number):

1 White 2 Black 3 Oriental 4 Indian 5 Other

9. If you were completely free to choose any job, what would you desire <u>most</u> as a lifetime job? (In answering this question give an <u>exact</u> job. For example, do not say "work on the railroad" but tell us what railroad job you would like to have). Write your answer in the box below.

ANSWER: 

13. If you could have as much schooling as you <u>desired</u>, which of the following would you do? (Circle only one number):

1 Quit school right now.
2 Complete high school.
3 Complete a business, commercial, electronics, or some other technical program after finishing high school.
4 Graduate from a junior college (2 years).
5 Graduate from a college or university.
6 Complete additional studies after graduating from a college or university.

Sex (Circle one.)

Male.....1

Female.....2

Date of Birth		
Mo.	Day	Year

Please complete the information above.

* * *

84. How do you describe yourself? (Circle one.)

American Indian.....1

Black or Afro-American or Negro.....2

Mexican-American or Chicano.....3

Puerto Rican.....4

Other Latin-American origin.....5

Oriental or Asian-American.....6

White or Caucasian.....7

Other.....8

* * *

95. Which best describes the location of the place in which you live? (Circle one.)

In a rural or farming community.....1

In a small city or town of fewer than 50,000 people that is not a suburb of a larger place.....2

In a medium-sized city (50,000-100,000 people).....3

In a suburb of a medium-sized city.....4

In a large city (100,000-500,000 people).....5

In a suburb of a large city.....6

In a very large city (over 500,000 people).....7

In a suburb of a very large city.....8

25. **In the column under YOU, circle the one number that goes with the best description of the kind of work you would like to do. Under FATHER, circle the one number that best describes the work done by your father (or male guardian). Under MOTHER, circle the one number that best describes the work done by your mother (or female guardian). The exact job may not be listed but circle the one that comes closest. If either of your parents is out of work, disabled, retired, or deceased, mark the kind of work that he or she used to do.**

	(Circle one number in each column.)		
	You	Father	Mother
CLERICAL such as bank teller, bookkeeper, secretary, typist, mail carrier, ticket agent	01	01	01
CRAFTSMAN such as baker, automobile mechanic, machinist, painter, plumber, telephone installer, carpenter	02	02	02
FARMER, FARM MANAGER	03	03	03
HOMEMAKER OR HOUSEWIFE	04	04	04
LABORER such as construction worker, car washer, sanitary worker, farm laborer	05	05	05
MANAGER, ADMINISTRATOR such as sales manager, office manager, school administrator, buyer, restaurant manager, government official	06	06	06
MILITARY such as career officer, enlisted man or woman in the armed forces	07	07	07
OPERATIVE such as meat cutter, assembler, machine operator, welder, taxicab, bus, or truck driver, gas station attendant	08	08	08
PROFESSIONAL such as accountant, artist, clergyman, dentist, physician, registered nurse, engineer, lawyer, librarian, teacher, writer, scientist, social worker, actor, actress	09	09	09
PROPRIETOR OR OWNER such as owner of a small business, contractor, restaurant owner	10	10	10
PROTECTIVE SERVICE such as detective, policeman or guard, sheriff, fireman	11	11	11
SALES such as salesman, sales clerk, advertising or insurance agent, real estate broker	12	12	12
SERVICE such as barber, beautician, practical nurse, private household worker, janitor, waiter	13	13	13
TECHNICAL such as draftsman, medical or dental technician, computer programmer	14	14	14

* * *

29. **To answer this question, circle one number for the highest level of education you would like to attain, and also circle one for the highest level you plan to attain.**

	(Circle one number in each column.)	
	Would like to attain	Plan to attain
Less than high school graduation	1	1
Graduate from high school but not go beyond that	2	2
Graduate from high school and then go to a vocational, technical, business, or trade school	3	3
Go to a junior college	4	4
Go to a four-year college or university	5	5
Go to a graduate or professional school *after college*	6	6

* * *

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Table A-1.—Distribution of nonmetropolitan Louisiana senior respondents for 1968 and 1972, by area, school, race, and sex

Area & School	1968						1972					
	Black			White			Black			White		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Northwest												
J.S.Clark	7[a]	6	13[a]									
Zwolle High							5	4	9			
Ebarb				13	8	21				13	7	20
Georgetown				11	7	18				10	12	22
Second Ward	36	31	67				16	27	43			
Stanley				6	6	12				5	5	10
Verda				5	9	14						
Northeast												
Forest				13	10	23				16	20	36
Newellton				20	12	32				16	8	24
Rayville High	1		1	34	30	64				30	26	56
Riverfield Academy										5	7	12
Wisner-Gilbert	10	17	27									
Wisner High							9	13	22			
Southwest												
Bordelonville				5	12	17				5	5	10
Carver	23	34	57									
Bunkie Sr. High							7	13	20			
Cottonport				17	18	35				13	25	38
W.W. Stewart	2	14	16									
Bastle							2	7	9			
Southeast												
E.Livingston High	6	12	18									
Springfield							10	4	14			
Holden				12	5	17				12	6	18
Livonia				10	17	27				9	14	23
Poydras				15	15	30				6	10	16
False River Academy										8	9	17
Romeville	1	2	3	8[b]	8	16[b]						
Romeville High (Boys)							14		14	2		2
Romeville High (Girls)								7	7		8	8
Scottville	6	10	16									
Belle Chasse							1	2	3			
TOTAL	92[a]	126	218[a]	169[b]	157	326[b]	64	77	141	150	162	312

[a]Includes 1 respondent whose questionnaire is missing.

[b]Includes 1 Native American.

Appendix B

It should be noted that use of ANOVA requires the assumption of interval level measurement of the dependent variable and that the dependent variables in this study—educational aspiration and occupational aspiration—do not fully meet this assumption. For education, the scores represent essentially 2-year increments except for the two middle categories. Since graduating from a junior college nearly always requires 2 full years and completing a business or technical program often takes less than this, the former was given the higher value.

The measure of occupational aspiration is a slight modification of occupational groupings used by the Bureau of the Census. These groups are ranked on the two dimensions of income and education with relatively high correspondence (Miller, 1977:244). Differences from the Census groupings in the measure used here include (1) addition of a classification for military between the white-collar and blue-collar segments, (2) addition of a category for homemaker and housewife as the final group, and (3) use of a separate classification for technical occupations (between professional and managers). Although the homemaker-housewife category usually is not considered to be an occupation, it is the only occupational status some women ever have; it was placed at the bottom because it has no income or earnings specifically associated with it and is usually not evaluated as an exciting and desirable life goal (Lopata, 1971:29-31, 138-148).

Statistical tests requiring assumption of interval-level measurement are used fairly routinely with ordinal-level measures that approximate interval-level ones because the tests are robust enough to be used with little fear of gross errors so long as the ordinal measure is monotonic (Bohrnstedt and Carter, 1971:131). The advantages of using the more powerful tests are well-known, and this increase in power makes the risk of errors in inference with them small in comparison with the more limited results of tests appropriate for ordinal-level measures.